RELIGIONS BEFORE CHRISTIANITY

C. C. EVERETT

I asked Caesar to put a
Yale lock on your chest & give
the bill to you —

Astronomy and Vishnu
Raphus Linn discovering

Fairy stories - Imagination

Gods - same gods or others?

Immortality

astronomy

Woman moral
new imagination

Dif between Confucius & Buddha

The earth is the lord's & the fulness thereof

Sam Johnsons onda

I'd wish see how they had

RELIGIONS BEFORE CHRISTIANITY.

A MANUAL FOR SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

BY

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PREFACE.

In the extremely limited space offered by this manual, it has been thought best to attempt to give general principles rather than details of fact. Those religions have been chosen for presentation which adapt themselves most readily to this treatment, or the names of which are most familiar. The Hebrew religion is not included, as it has already been presented in this series of manuals. Mohammedanism is excluded by the plan and title of the work. Teachers can add much to the interest of the study by presenting such details in regard to each religion as they may judge expedient.

It will be observed that there are two kinds of questions. Those that are printed in the longer lines and in the larger type have always answers in the paragraphs to which they refer. The others are more general in their nature. To these, no answer is given, though one is sometimes suggested. The object of these is to lead the pupil to regard the religion as a real thing, and thus to prevent the study from being a mere affair of memory. Of course, they are not to be used mechanically. They

are designed to suggest conversation between teacher and pupils.

A few references are added to such English books as it is thought might either be most helpful or most available. I have to thank the Rev. H. G. Spaulding, Secretary of the Sunday School Society, for valuable help in preparing this list.

C. C. E.

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RELIGIONS BEFORE CHRISTIANITY.

I.

THE EARLIEST RELIGION.

1. *The earliest form of religion cannot be known.* The earliest peoples kept no record. The earliest remains of human workmanship that are found represent a period already comparatively late in the history of man; and even these do not convey the precise information which we require.

2. *The religions of savage races* now existing may perhaps teach us something in regard to the earliest form of religion. Many of these races, however, have evidently fallen from a somewhat higher condition, and in regard to none of them can we know through what changes it has passed. While we gain what information we can from the study of the religion of savages, we must remember how very imperfect are the results thus obtained, so far as our knowledge of the earliest religion is concerned.

3. *No people absolutely without religion* has probably yet been found; although in some degraded tribes the religion is often hardly worthy of the name.

4. *Four elements* enter into the religion of the savage, viz.: fetichism, nature-worship, and the worship of the spirits of the dead. There is also a more or less distinct recognition of spiritual beings that cannot be identified by us with the objects of any one of the forms of worship just named.

5. *Fetichism and nature-worship* grow out of the fact that the savage believes in general that the objects about him are something like himself; that is, he believes that they have

thought and feeling, only they often possess much greater power than he has.

6. *In fetichism*, some object is selected by accident or caprice. The worshiper sometimes distinguishes it by artificial marks. He thinks that this object is a divinity that will bring him good fortune. If he succeeds in his enterprise, he honors it. If he fails, he punishes it, or throws it away. Some savages have great numbers of these fetiches.

7. *In nature-worship*, the object is selected for more special reasons than the fetich. It is something that is imposing by size or strength or usefulness, or even by its destructive power. It may be something merely that has been associated with good or evil fortune. Thus, it may be a mountain or a river, or an insect or a wild beast.

8. *The worship of the spirits* of the dead holds an important place in the religion of most savages. This worship is often nothing more than an attempt to propitiate the spirits that are feared.

9. *The existence of the soul* is firmly believed by the savage. He thinks that the soul, even in this life, may be sometimes independent of the body. He believes that the soul may leave the body in sleep. When he has dreamed of a distant place, he believes that his soul has really been there. When he has dreamed of a person, living or dead, he thinks that the soul of this person has actually visited him. This soul, he sometimes identifies with his shadow, or with the reflection of himself in a mirror, or with any representation of himself. For this reason, the savage is generally unwilling to have his picture taken. Whoever has his picture, he believes has some power over himself.

10. *In the worship of spirits in general*, those that work evil often receive more attention than those that are more kindly disposed. The former need to be propitiated; the latter do not.

11. *The chief and most common methods of worship are* prayers for what is wanted, and offerings. The latter include what the spirits are supposed to value the most. To the dead

are given the articles that they are supposed to need in the new life. Much important knowledge of the habits of early peoples is gathered from objects found in tombs or other resting-places of the dead. Attendants, and even wives, are sometimes slain that they may accompany the spirit of the dead chief. Especially are offerings of food universal. What the spirits of the dead are supposed to enjoy, other spirits and the divinities in general are also supposed to prize. The earliest form of sacrifice is thus the offering of gifts. If animals are slain, it is that they may serve the divinity for food.

12. *The savage may seem very foolish* to us, when he honors, as divine, stones, trees, and beasts,— things so much lower than himself. But we must remember how very little he knows about the world. He does, however, feel that there is about him a power which is different from any strength that he has, and which is greater than his strength. He feels himself at the mercy of this power. He has not learned to trust it.

13. *The objects about him do wonderful things without organs* such as he has. How rapidly the snake moves without limbs! How the animals understand one another without speech! How they guide themselves through regions that are strange to them! How they foresee coming changes! How the river brings to him so much that he needs! He believes, as we have seen, that everything has a consciousness like his own; and whatever works thus without instruments seems to him supernatural or divine.

14. *His notions about the soul may seem absurd.* But it is much that he has found something in himself which can say, *I* and *me*, which is not the body, though it is closely connected with the body.

15. *He sometimes means in kindness* what seems to us very cruel. What can seem more cruel than to kill those who are growing old, as if to escape the burden of them. But the savage often believes that he enters the next world in the state in which he leaves this. If his body is strong when he dies, his spirit will be strong after death. Thus he wishes to be killed before the infirmities of age have come upon him.

16. *The religion of the savage is of a very low sort;* and he is often really cruel. This religion, however, is the beginning of something that is to be the great glory of life. It is already a great step to feel the sense of an invisible power, even if one only fears it.

17. *The religion of the savage is superstition;* because, while he recognizes a supernatural power, he does not know what it really is. This power is to him something chiefly to be feared, or something that can be made an ally. He does not know that it has ends of its own. That which is beautiful does not reveal it to him, more than that which is ugly. Even the rainbow he sometimes believes to be a demon.

18. *When man knows that this power*, before which the savage shrinks, *is just and good*, and that it would have men also become just and good, then superstition has become religion.

QUESTIONS.

1. Is it possible to discover what was the earliest form of religion? Why not?

> What is the earliest thing that you remember in your own life? Can you remember how you first showed your love for your mother or other friends? Can you remember how you showed that you knew that you had friends or mother? Can you illustrate by this the way in which the race of men have forgotten their earliest history?

2. What is the best means we have of getting any knowledge of the earliest religion? Why is this means not wholly satisfactory?

> If you cannot remember how you felt and acted when you were a baby, how do you know anything about it? What reason have you to think that you did not always walk and talk? Can you find out in this way *exactly* what you used to do? Why not?

3. Is there probably any people wholly without religion? Is the religion always what we should easily recognize as such?

Can you think of any other matters in regard to which we cannot judge others by our standards? Think of some games or other amusements that would not seem such to you. Did you ever hear what the Hindus think of the English dancing and out-of-door games? So may not some people find religious meaning in ceremonies that we should think very unreligious?

4. What three elements enter into the religion of savages?

5. What feeling is the source of fetichism and nature-worship?

Do you ever have a similar feeling toward lifeless objects? Did you never get angry with a stone that you stumbled over? Should you have been angry, if you had thought that it was merely a stone? Does every little girl always remember that her doll cannot love her, and cannot feel if she punishes it? How does the sailor sometimes feel towards his ship?

6. What is meant by fetichism?

7. What is meant by nature-worship?

Did you ever know any one to believe in unlucky times, any one, for instance, who would not begin anything on Friday? Did you ever know any one to believe in lucky or unlucky things? How does this resemble fetich worship, and how does it differ from it? Have you never felt an affection for any object in nature,— any flower, or tree, or brook?

8. Of what nature is the worship of spirits?

9. What does the savage believe about the soul? How does he connect this with dreams or reflections of himself?

10. Why are kindly disposed spirits less worshiped than those who work evil?

11. What are the most common methods of worship? Of what nature are the earliest sacrifices?

12. Is all this as foolish as it looks at first? What has the savage found out in spite of his ignorance?

Do you never feel the presence of such a power in the world? Did you ever think what makes the trees grow, and the streams run, and the apples fall? Do scientific laws really explain anything?

13. What makes the savage think that some of the things about him are more divine than he?

Did you ever think how the birds of passage find their way from one region to another? How do you suppose that a cat that has been carried a long way in a box finds its way home? How do you suppose that the stars keep up in the sky? Does the earth rest on anything? Can you not, then, understand the mystery that the savage found in everything, and how he thought that the things about him must have some supernatural power that he did not have?

14. Is his notion of the soul as foolish as it may look at first?

What do you mean when you say of yourself, "I have a headache," or "I have hurt my hand"? What is it that suffers? Can the hand or the head itself ache? What do you mean when you say, "My head is tired with studying or thinking"? Can the head *think?* If we should take the body to pieces, could we find the something that thinks and feels? What is it?

15. Is the savage always as cruel as he seems? Give an illustration.

16. What sort of religion has the savage? Is he never really cruel? What can we claim for his religion?

Are children never cruel without knowing it? Are they never cruel without caring? Suppose such children to be as large and strong as men, would they not be something like savages? How are savages like children? How are they different?

17. Why do we call the religion of the savage superstition?

Are you ever afraid in the dark? What are you afraid of Was not the savage in his ignorance very much like a child in the dark?

18. When does superstition become religion?

If a man merely trusts that God will help him carry out his private plans, so that he shall be safe or rich, is he religious or superstitious? How can any man help to carry out God's plans in the world? How does the superstitious man try to make God his instrument? How does the religious man try to make himself God's instrument?

II.

ANCIENT ARYAN RELIGION.

1. *The ancestors of most European peoples*, of the Hindus of good caste, and of the Persians, once formed but one nation; just as the ancestors of the English and the inhabitants of the United States once formed but one nation.

2. *As from England colonists* went out to found new States in Canada, in Massachusetts, Virginia, and other regions, so emigrants went out at different times, and in different directions, from this more ancient home.

3. *Different forms of speech* arose in the different colonies that in time became different languages. This occurred, because the different colonies had little intercourse with one another. So in some parts of England, Germany, and other countries are found dialects that persons living in another part of the same country cannot easily understand.

4. *Neither history nor tradition* gives any account of this primeval people. The only evidence of its existence is found in the various languages spoken by its descendants. These, from their resemblances, show that they are derived from a common origin; while from the structure and meaning of the words, some hints are given as to the beliefs and customs of the common ancestors.

5. *This ancient people* were pastoral in their life. They were also familiar with the arts of war, and bore some marks of civilization. They are commonly called Aryans.

6. *Their gods* would seem to have been chiefly connected with the bright upper heavens. Their name for gods signified bright or celestial.

7. *Their chief god* at the time that the ancestors of the Greeks and Romans left their early home would seem to have

been *Dyaus*, the heavenly, or celestial one. This name is preserved in the Greek Zeus. He is also called Dyaushpitar, or the celestial father. This title reappears in the Latin Jupiter.

8. *Other gods* were also worshiped; some of those that we shall find to have been recognized in the Vedas were already honored. *Varuna*, representing the enveloping heavens, was already somewhat known, though not fully developed, as in later times. Also, a divinity of the morning, called Saramyu.

9. *The name of Saramyu* would seem to be preserved in the Greek name for the furies. The dawn was said to expose crime, because with the shades of night the veil was taken away by which crime had been concealed. Thus the name of the divinity came at last to be regarded simply as that of an avenger of crime.

10. *Faith in immortality* was cherished by the ancient Aryans. This is evident from the nature of their funeral rites.

11. *The three important ideas*, of a Father in heaven, of a power that punishes sin, and of immortality, would seem to have been held by this early people, and transmitted to their descendants.

QUESTIONS.

1. What nations are said to have a common ancestry?
2. How can you illustrate this relation?
3. How do the languages of these peoples come to be so different? How can you illustrate this by dialects in different parts of the same country to-day?

> To what extent do we have such dialects in this country? Could you not understand the language in any part of the United States? Why is there so little difference of language in this country?

4. How do we know anything about this early people?
5. What was the character of the civilization of this early people? By what name are they ordinarily called?
6. What was the nature of the divinities worshiped by them?

7. What was the name of their chief god?

What do you see when you look up into the sky? How far off does it seem? Do you never, in looking up into the sky, have a feeling that may help you understand how these early people found something there to worship?

8. What other gods did they worship?

9. How did the name of a goddess of the dawn become connected by the Greeks with the punishers of crime?

Why should any be afraid of the light? What does Jesus say of hating the light? [John iii., 19, 20.]

10. What is said of faith in immortality among the ancient Aryans?

11. What three important ideas do we thus find that they held?

III.

THE HINDU RELIGION.

1. *The ancestors of the Hindus* remained longer in their ancient Aryan home than those of other peoples, and their religion may be regarded as a direct continuance of the ancient Aryan faith.

2. *The Vedas* contain the earliest records of the Hindu religion. These consist of hymns addressed to various divinities. Some of these hymns are of great beauty. They show that the nation was already far advanced in literary skill. They are very ancient. Their precise date is unknown, but they must have been written earlier than the twelfth century before Christ.

3. *The god Varuna* is recognized in the earlier Vedic hymns as filling the chief position. Varuna represented the heavens which envelop the earth. He was a god of great sublimity and holiness. Nothing escaped his knowledge. The thoughts of men's hearts were known to him. The winkings of their eyes were numbered. Where two talked together, there was the god Varuna as the third. Some of the hymns addressed to him are very lofty, and express exalted religious feeling.

I will give in prose translation a part of a hymn addressed to Varuna.

The great one who rules over these worlds beholds all things as if he were close at hand. When any man thinks he is doing aught by stealth, the gods know it all; and they perceive every one who stands or walks or glides along secretly or withdraws into his house or into any lurking place. Whatever two persons, sitting together, devise, Varuna, the king, knows it, being present there as a third. This earth, too, belongs to the king Varuna; and that vast sky, whose ends

are so remote. . . . He who should flee far beyond the sky would not there escape from Varuna the king. His messengers, descending from heaven, traverse this world; thousand-eyed, they look across the whole earth. King Varuna perceives all that exists within heaven and earth, and all that is beyond. The winkings of men's eyes are all numbered by him. He handles all these things as a gamester throws his dice.*

4. *Indra, the rain-god*, seems to have, in the course of time, succeeded Varuna in the popular regard. As the people descended to a warmer region, they felt more than before the blessing that comes with the rain. Perhaps, also, they lost something of their early nobleness. Indra became their principal deity. He was the god of the rain. The water was supposed to be shut up in the clouds, withheld from mortals by demons. Indra attacks these demons. The lightning is the spear that he hurls against them. The demons are conquered. The water falls in torrents, and Indra is praised for his great victory.

5. *Indra was also the god of battles.* His worshipers called upon him to help them win the victory. He was nearer to them than Varuna, and was called especially the friend of man. He was very fond of the soma juice, a sort of mildly intoxicating drink which the Hindus used in their religious rites. They offered it to all the gods, but Indra had a special love for it. He also punished sin, but he was less praised for holiness than Varuna.

6. *The Hindus had many other gods.* There was Agni, the god of fire. He was regarded also as a priest of the gods, because the offerings to them were put into the fire. There were the gods of the sun and of the dawn and of the tempest. The rainbow was regarded as a beautiful divinity.

7. *The gods represented*, for the most part, *natural objects or forces.* They were not these objects or forces taken simply as in the savage worship; but they were gods, partly connected with these natural things, and partly detached from them. This statement can perhaps be made clear by an example.

* From the Atharva Veda.

Agni was, as we have seen, the god of fire. I will quote, in a prose translation, verses taken from a hymn to Agni: —

TO AGNI.

Let us lift this song of adoration, like a car [laden with praise] to him who is worthy of it, the preserver of riches, for his providence brings us weal in council. In alliance with thee, O Agni! no harm can befall us.

He whom thou helpest in sacrifice flourishes; he lives uninjured, and wins beautiful strength. He is exalted, and no trouble reaches him. In alliance with thee, etc.

May we have power to kindle thee! Bring the work to its issue. The gods eat what is sacrificed in thee. . . . In alliance, etc.

Let us bring wood. Let us accomplish thine offering, at every change of the moon reminding thee of us. Bring the work to its issue, so that we may live long. In alliance, etc.

In the night, thine offspring [the stars] are the protectors of dwellings and of the two-footed and the four-footed creatures. At the dawning [as the sun] thou art greater and brighter, thou messenger! In alliance, etc.

Thou art the sacrificer and the first herald; thou art the teacher, the purifier. Thou art the priest of nature. Thou knowest and blessest, O wise one! every priestly work. In alliance, etc.

. . . . . .

When thou dost harness the red-flaming, the storm-driven, span to the chariot, then thou dost roar like a bull. Then dost thou fall upon the wood with the smoke-flagged [flames]. In alliance, etc.

Then even the birds are scared by thy bellowing, when grass devouring thy sparks are scattered. Easy is it for thee and thy chariot to reach the goal. In alliance with thee, O Agni! no harm can befall us.

It will be noticed that Agni is here described as the fire. It is fed with wood. We see its sparks. We hear its roaring. We see its brightness in the sun and the stars. Yet it is something more than fire. It is a god. Yet it is not a god with a personality separate from the object it represents, like one of the Greek divinities. It is, as was stated before, in part connected with the natural object, in part distinct from it.

8. *Varuna and Indra were not exalted* above the other divinities as Jupiter was above the classic gods. It is only that they were somewhat more prominent than the rest.

9. *Every god, as he was praised, was called supreme* above all the rest. Very much the same terms of adoration are found applied to all. It seems as if the worshipers felt that all were manifestations of only one divinity. Everything seemed to them divine. They had not merely the vague sense of the supernatural, such as the savage has. They felt something of the real beauty and divinity that was about them, so that their hymns often express a real worship.

10. *They had strong faith in immortality.* Yama was the king of the abodes of death. He probably represented the setting sun. To his paradise the souls of the good and noble went, and found supreme happiness.

11. *The worship* of the divinities consisted in prayer and praise, and in offerings. The offerings consisted chiefly of clarified butter poured upon fire, and of the fermented juice of the soma plant. This seems to have been poured upon fire, or sprinkled on the sacred grass with which the floor was strewn. It was poured upon the fire, that Agni might transmit it to the divinities for whom it was designed. There seem to have been no temples. The worship was held in a chamber in the house of the worshiper devoted to this purpose.

12. *The Hindu religion underwent still greater changes.* The sacred or Brahman caste became more and more supreme in religious matters. Beliefs were largely transformed. Many, in process of time, came consciously to recognize all the gods as indeed manifestations of one divinity. Many came to look upon all that is as the manifestation of this divinity. This deity was not like any of the gods that are ordinarily worshiped. It was simply the great unity of the universe, with neither thought nor love. This one divinity was commonly called Brahma.

13. *To lose their individual existence*, and to become absorbed in Brahma, came to be, for these thinkers, the great object of religion; so they withdrew from the world into the wilderness.

They fasted and inflicted upon themselves all bodily torment. They wished to draw and drive themselves back into themselves, to lose thought and desire, that so they might become one with Brahma, the all.

14. *The belief in the transmigration of souls* furnished the special motive for this course. They believed that their souls would be born, endlessly, into new existences, in heaven, in earth, or in hell. Thus the future was full of peril. Life, at best, they regarded as an evil. If, by the processes above referred to, they could become absorbed into Brahma, they would rest at death, lost in him, and would be born no more into the changes and sorrows of existence.

15. *These Hindus held a profound truth* in the belief that their true life was in God. Paul himself tells us that "in him we live and move and have our being."

16. *They held it very imperfectly*, however. They did not know what God is. They thought that they must sink back into unconsciousness to find him, and must thus lose themselves in him. The apostle John teaches a higher and more inspiring truth: "God is love," he tells us; "and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and he in him." We share the divine life most when we live the fullest, most active, and most loving lives. Another point of difference between this Hindu view and the Christian teaching is, that in it God was only in Nature, not above it. That recognized nothing more than this unity of all things. Paul teaches the fuller truth. [Eph. iv., 6; comp. Acts xvii., 28.]

17. *The modern Hindu religion* is very unlike the ancient. The principal deities recognized in the later religion are Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. These are known as the creator, the preserver, and the destroyer. They form a trinity, and are represented as united. Of these, Brahma receives least honor, because his work is regarded as completed. Vishnu and Siva have each many worshipers, who make of him their chief divinity. Vishnu is believed to have been incarnated several times upon the earth. These incarnations were under various forms, as those of a fish, a tortoise, and a man, the

great hero of Hindu tradition, and were to deliver or to help man. The worship of Siva involves often extravagant and shameful rites. Besides these deities, a multitude of divinities, idols, and natural objects are worshiped Especially are the cow, the serpent, and the monkey considered sacred.

18. *A purer and more spiritual religion*, based largely upon the teachings of Jesus, has been accepted by certain Hindus. Chunder Sen is now the most prominent representative of this movement.

QUESTIONS.

1. What is the relation of the early Hindu religion to that of the ancient Aryans?

2. What is the name of the earliest religious writings of the Hindus? Their nature? Their date?

3. What divinity fills the chief position in the earlier hymns of the Vedas? What was his character?

> What words of Jesus does one of these phrases remind you of? [Matt. x., 30.]

4. What divinity succeeds Varuna in the highest honor of the Hindus? What are some of the reasons of this change? What was the chief work of Indra?

> Do the clouds keep back water? What do they do for us? Are the clouds, then, to be regarded as enemies or friends? Do we ever make, in other matters, a mistake like that of the Hindus? Do you remember a verse of a hymn, by Cowper,* that illustrates this?

5. What else was believed about Indra?

6. What are some other gods that the Hindus worshiped?

> Do you remember anything that was said about the rainbow in the first lesson? What is the difference between the way the Hindu regarded the rainbow and that in which the savage regarded it? What gain does this show in the progress of religion?

7. What, in general, was the nature of these gods?

8. In what sense were Varuna and Indra the chief gods?

9. What peculiarity of their worship is spoken of? What

* See the hymn beginning "God moves in a mysterious way."

view of nature would seem to be shown in this? What advance does this show from the religion of the savage?

> How does this compare with our common view of nature? Which do you think is the highest view,—to look upon the world as a sort of complicated machine, or to look upon it as the manifestation of a certain divine life? Which do you think is the truest view?

10. What was the faith of the early Hindus in regard to immortality?

11. Give some account of the worship that was paid by them to their divinities.

12. What very different view came later to prevail in regard to the gods, and in regard to the universe?

13. What was the great object of religion with these thinkers? How did they accomplish this object?

> Have any Christians ever used such bodily torment in order to obtain salvation? What can you find out about Simon Stylites? Have not Christians often believed in fasting for the sake of spiritual good? Was this the method of Jesus? [Matt. xi., 19.] Is it not better to fast sometimes than to pamper the body? How should we live in this respect?

14. What was the doctrine of transmigration of souls?

15. What was the truth in the belief of these thinkers in regard to their relation with God?

16. What was their error? Compare their thought with that of John, and with that of Paul. What other point of difference is named between the Hindu and the Christian view?

> In the quotation from the Epistle to the Ephesians, which words mark the difference between Paul's view and that of the Hindus? Suppose a leaf to want to enter most really into the life of the tree, how could it best do it? Could it do it by drawing back into itself and thus withering? How does this illustrate the beliefs that we are considering?

17. Give some account of the later Hindu religion.

18. What movement toward a better religion is taking place among the Hindus?

IV.

BUDDHISM.

1. *The religion called Buddhism prevails* in Ceylon, Siam, and Burmah, also in Nepal, Thibet, China, and Japan. Buddhism, as it exists in the three countries first-named, is supposed to be more like the original form of the religion than that professed by Buddhists in the other and more northern countries. It at first extended over the greater part of India. It is calculated that more than a third of the inhabitants of the earth are Buddhists.

2. *Buddhism is named* from the title of its founder. This title means the awakened, or the enlightened. It describes one who is believed to have attained the highest wisdom.

3. *The founder of the religion* was born as a prince, in the latter half of the sixth century B.C. The sense of the evils of existence drove him into a life of poverty and withdrawal from the world. He became a recluse, and lived only on alms.

4. *The character of Buddha*, so far as we know anything in regard to it, was one of extreme beauty. He united in a remarkable degree strength and gentleness. None were so lowly that his sympathy did not reach them.

5. *Many beliefs common to other Hindu* systems were held by Buddha through the whole course of his life and teaching.

6. *The doctrine of the transmigration of souls* was practically thus held. When a man dies, he is born again on earth, or in heaven or in hell. The state into which one is born was believed to depend upon a certain law of retribution, by which every good act is rewarded, and every evil act is punished. When this recompense will be received is doubtful. Acts are like seeds; one, like the pea or the bean, bears its fruit very soon; another, like the oak, bears its fruit very late. If a man is born into heaven, he remains there only so long as some

good deed requires. After that, he may be born into hell for some evil deed committed either before or after the good deed. The future is thus wholly uncertain. As we cannot remember our past existences, we do not know what good or evil we may have committed, so we do not know what joy or misery may be before us. This law of retribution is called Karma.

7. *The object of Buddha was* to put an end to this process of repeated birth. He therefore sought, and as he believed found, the cause of this process, and thus the way to end it.

8. I. *He taught that nothing is permanent.* There is no reality in the universe, but that of a process which goes on forever. Nothing has more reality than bubbles that rise and burst.

9. II. *He taught that men are bound to the world* by so strong a love, that, when they die, they are drawn back again into life.

10. III. *He taught how to overcome* this clinging to life. This was, first, by learning the emptiness of all earthly things and thus acquiring a disgust for what had given most pleasure; and, secondly, by training one's self in the virtues of unselfishness and charity.

11. *Certain physical states*, as that of trance, were also used for this purpose; but whether these formed a part of Buddha's teaching, I do not know.

12. *To imitate the course of their master* was in general the duty of the disciples. They were obliged to withdraw from the world, and join the order that he founded. They must live on alms, and devote themselves to the religious life. Fasting and bodily torment were, however, forbidden. Besides the disciples who gave themselves wholly to his direction were others less perfectly identified with his work, but who yet owned Buddha as their master.

13. *All stood upon an equal footing in this order*, no matter what had been their previous station in life. The principle of caste was not recognized there.

14. *Religion has no place* in the teaching of Buddha; at least, religion in the common meaning of that word was not

taught by him. He recognized no divine basis or substance of the world. The Hindu gods were recognized, but they were like fairies or angels. Buddha did not worship them; they were believed to worship him. After he became Buddha, he was the head of the universe.

15. *Nirvana* was the state which was to reward the Buddhist saint. Nirvana could be in part entered upon during this life. The saint could reach a lofty peace, which sprang from the sense that all his passions and desires were conquered, and that he should never be born into any other life. Full Nirvana was reached at death. *What Nirvana was positively*, Buddha refused to explain. On the one side, he did not *affirm* that it involved a continuation of being in any sense. On the other side, he did not *deny* that it was a continuation of being. He left the matter a perfect blank. The Buddhists have largely believed, however, that Nirvana is annihilation; and the best authority teaches that this view resulted naturally from general teaching of Buddha.

16. *Buddhists in general do not look forward to Nirvana* as though it belonged to them. In fact, Buddhists in general give little thought to Nirvana. They think only of the heavens and the hells that may be before them, or some future existence on the earth, and leave Nirvana for persons of exceptional saintliness. When it is understood that, in the last birth before reaching Nirvana, the saint was believed to have the power to pass through the air at will, it may be plain that, to most, if not to all, the thought of Nirvana must be something very far off and vague.

17. *The Buddhists have monasteries* very much like those of the Catholic church. The heads of the monks are shaven like those of the Catholic monks. They have the rite of confession also, though the confession is made to the body of monks, not to a single priest. Indeed, the resemblance to the methods of the Catholic convent life is very striking in many respects.

18. *The memory of Buddha* has always been honored by the Buddhists. They have cherished relics of his body, or what they believe to be such. They offer to him praise and adora-

tion, but not prayer, for he has passed into Nirvana. The adoration is paid to his memory. They do pray to those who in the future are to be Buddhas, and may also call upon the gods, who, as we have seen, receive only a minor homage. Probably no worshipers use so many flowers in their rites as the Buddhists. Preaching fills as large a place in their religion as it does in that of the Christian.

QUESTIONS.

1. Where does Buddhism prevail? What proportion of the inhabitants of the earth are Buddhists?

2. What is the origin of the name Buddhism? What does the name Buddha mean?

What other religion is named for a title of its founder? What does this title mean?

3. Into what position was Buddha born? Why did he give up this position?

Ought the evils of life to drive one to leave the world? How ought they to affect us?

4. What was the character of Buddha?

How does this remind you of Jesus? How does Buddha differ from Jesus?

5. Were the teachings of the religion of Buddha all original with him?

6. Name one that was received from the Hindu religion. How was one's future life determined? Why was the future doubtful?

Compare this with the Christian doctrine of immortality.

7. What was the object of Buddha's teaching?

8. What did he teach about the reality of things in the world?

Is there any outward thing in the world that we can trust to, as always to be ours, and always to give us pleasure?

9. Why, according to Buddha, do men live again after death?

10. How was this attraction to the world to be overcome?

How much of this corresponds to the teaching of Jesus?

11. What physical states are referred to in this connection?

12. What was to be the general life of the Buddhist?

Compare this with the life taught by Jesus. What Christians have adopted a life like that of Buddhists? What advantage has this life? What disadvantage?

13. What was the relation of Buddhism to the law of caste?

Do you know anything about Hindu caste? Is there anything like caste in this country? Is it a good thing?

14. What did Buddha teach about God?

Can you imagine Christianity without the idea of God? Can you imagine life without it?

15. What was Nirvana? What was it as reached in this life? What after death?

Is this like the heaven of Christianity? Must not the Christian give up himself as truly as the Buddhist? What does he give himself up to? To what did the Buddhist give himself up?

16. How do ordinary Buddhists think of Nirvana? What sign was there believed to be when the Buddhist was soon to enter Nirvana? What does this show?

Can you imagine a school with different prizes for the younger and older scholars? What would the younger think of the highest prizes, say a Greek Plato?

17. What is said of the Buddhist monasteries?

18. What is the nature of the honor paid to Buddha? To whom do the Buddhists pray? What else is said about their methods of religious service?

V.

THE RELIGION OF THE PARSEES.

1. *The people who hold the Mazdean religion*, and who are called Parsees, are comparatively few in number. These are mostly in the Presidency of Bombay, in India. The religion was, however, introduced into India from Persia, in which country a small number of Parsees, bearing however another name, still remain.

2. *The Parsees are often called fire worshipers*, from the fact that they keep constantly burning a sacred fire. They are, however, in no special sense fire worshipers.

3. *This religion resembles that of the Vedas* in some respects, though in some it is very different. It is a more spiritual religion, and its morality is much more marked.

4. *The founder of this religion* is believed to be Zoroaster, or, in the older form of his name, Zarathustra. It is doubtful, however, whether this word be not a title, rather than a name. He lived very long before the Christian era; how long, we cannot conjecture.

5. *He was no recluse like Buddha*, but lived in the world like other men.

6. *He taught a lofty religion* which led to his persecution, and to his leaving his native land. These things are implied by certain passages in the sacred books.

7. *The most sacred book of the Parsees* is called the *Avesta*. One part consists largely of hymns and psalms; that is, expressions of praise, of which the oldest are in verse. Another consists chiefly of the law. We may compare them with the Book of Psalms and that of Leviticus in our Bible.

8. *The highest divinity of the religion* is Ormuzd, or, in the more ancient language, Ahura Mazda. He is the creator of good spirits, and of whatever is good and useful in the world. He created the universe itself, so far as it is good. He is the god of light; and, at first, probably, the impersonation of light.

9. *Over against Ormuzd* (Ahura Mazda) *was Ahriman* (Angra Mainyus), the power of darkness. He created an evil universe, as Ormuzd (Ahura Mazda) created a good universe. He made snakes and insects. He made, also, a host of evil spirits, to do battle with the good spirits.

10. *The spirits of men* were also created by Ormuzd (Ahura Mazda). They were created all at once at the beginning. He gave them their choice, whether to remain in the spiritual world at peace, or to put on bodies and be born into the world, to take part in the battle with the powers of evil. They chose to enter the life of the world. Thus, their very existence was for the purpose of accomplishing something for goodness. In spite of this, some became wicked. These have left the service of the power of light, and entered that of the power of darkness. They are thus traitors to their own cause.

11. *They worshiped many other gods;* who were all, however, created by Ahura Mazda, and subordinate to him. They worshiped, also, objects of nature, as trees, water, and stars. I will add an example of the praise of natural objects just spoken of: —

All waters, the fountains, as well as those flowing down in streams, praise we.
All trees, the growing, adorned with tops, praise we.
The whole earth, praise we.
The whole heaven, praise we.
All stars, the moon, and the sun, praise we.
All lights, without beginning, praise we.
All cattle, those which live under the water, under the heavens, . . . the beasts with claws, praise we.
All the good, pure creatures working for Ahura Mazda, praise we.

12. *Morality is enforced* by this religion in a striking and grand way. It teaches truthfulness and honesty. Goodness,

with it, is nothing abstract and vague. It means the being good for something, the doing something to advance life. Instead of calling men to seclusion and poverty, as Buddhism did, it calls them to a life of industry and prosperity.

13. *The view of life* held by this religion is, that it is a great battle-ground between good and evil. Ahura Mazda is at the head of the army of the good. With him work the gods and spirits, good men, and the good lower creation. Even the trees and the objects of nature are described as having their place in this great army. Opposed to this army is the host of darkness, headed by Ahriman [Angra Mainyus]. Under him are his demons, evil men, and the bad creation, such as snakes and reptiles.

14. *Belief in immortality* is firmly held by this religion. After death, the soul remains about the body for three nights. Then it goes to the bridge that leads to the abode of spirits. There the deeds of the good and the bad are weighed. For the good, the bridge is so wide that they pass over it into paradise. It would appear that the bridge grows narrow, when the souls of the evil would pass over it, and they fall into hell. The spirits of the good remain in paradise, and those of the wicked in hell, till the end of the struggle between light and darkness, or of good and evil.

15. *This battle is not to go on forever.* At last, the powers of good will win the victory by the aid of Saoshyans, the deliverer who is to come.

16. *At this consummation, the dead will be raised.* The souls of the dead will be joined to their old bodies. The wicked will be judged, and sent to hell for three days. Then, good and evil will alike be plunged into molten metal. This will be to the good as pleasant as a bath in warm milk. To the evil, it will be terribly painful, just as it would be to any of us now. At the end of the three days, when they come forth from this molten metal, the wicked will have become wholly purified. There will be no difference between the good and the bad. All will enter into endless blessedness.

17. *The sacred rites* of the Parsees involve much that is

merely formal. The sacred drink, called by the Hindus soma, fills a great place in their service, under the name of haoma. One of the most important observances consists in eating sacred cakes and in drinking the haoma. Special passages from their Scripture are read in connection with this. At present, the priests only eat and drink at this rite. The priests also read for those who arrange for it (not to them) the sacred books. This counts as a merit to those who employ the priests in this service. Holy water is an important element in their rites. The sacred fire is kept always burning. Although, as we have seen, work is so sacred for men, yet use for household or mechanical ends makes fire impure, and it has every little while to be kindled afresh from the central fire of the community. It should be noticed, however, that according to the sacred books, such forms are always subordinate to virtue. Even their own prayers work against the wicked.

18. *This religion is in some respects superior and in some inferior* to the others which we have studied. It has a recognition of the moral ideal and of the divine goodness which the Hindu did not have. But the Parsee does not have the truth which the Brahman possessed of the union of the soul with God. It enforces the moral law by the thought of a good God, as Buddhism did not; but it does not have the inspiration that comes from having this ideal manifested as a human form, as it is in the story of Buddha. Its morality was more practical than that of the Buddhist; but the latter had a tenderness which it lacks.

QUESTIONS.

1. Are there many Parsees? Where do they live? What other name has their religion? Which country gave the religion to the others?
2. Are the Parsees in any special sense fire worshipers?
3. Compare the Parsee religion with that of the Vedas.
4. Who was its founder?
5. Compare him with Buddha.
6. What is known of his history?

7. What is the name of the most sacred book of this religion? Of what parts does it consist?

8. Give some account of the highest divinity of this religion.

What does it mean when it says in the New Testament (I. John i., 5) that God is light? What is the difference between this and the statement that Ormuzd [Ahura Mazda] is light? Name some of the blessings that light brings? How would you like to pass a winter near the North Pole? Can you not then understand that the God of light should be regarded as the best of all divinities?

9. Give some account of Ahriman (Angra Mainyus) and his creation.

Did you never wonder what troublesome insects were made for, or how there came to be sickness and pain in the world of a good God? How do the Parsees explain this? What do you think of this explanation? Is there anything wholly evil? What sort of people would those be who never had any pain or trouble? What sort of history have the best and most heroic persons in the world had? Compare the Christian idea of evil with that of the Parsees.

10. When were the spirits of men created? What choice was given them? Have all been true to their cause?

What do you suppose that you were put into the world for? Was any one made simply that he might have a good time? What did Jesus say that he was sent into the world for? [Matt. xx., 28.] What do you think of those who live as if there was nothing for them to do in the world but to amuse themselves?

11. What else did they worship? Were any of these equal to Ormuzd (Ahura Mazda)?

Compare this worship of natural objects with the reference to them in Psalms. [Psalm cxlviii., 3–10.] What is the difference? Do you not suppose that both peoples had something the same feeling toward these things? What was it?

12. What was the teaching of this religion in regard to virtue?

What was the test of goodness suggested by Jesus? [Matt. vii., 16. John xv., 8.]

13. What is the view of life taken by this religion? Describe the two opposing hosts recognized by Parsism.

Are there not really two such opposing armies in the world? Is it not a grand thing to have part in such a battle? Is it so, if one is on the wrong side?

14. What was believed to become of souls at death?

15. What will be the result of the struggle between good and evil?

16. Describe the final events as regards the good and the evil.

17. Give some account of the sacred rites of the Parsees.

18. What does this religion lack that Brahmanism taught? What does it lack that Buddhism taught?

Which do you think is worth the most, that which Parsism had that Brahmanism did not have, or that which Brahmanism had that Parsism did not? Compare, in a similar way, Parsism and Buddhism. But is not a religion imperfect without all these elements?

VI.

THE ROMAN AND THE GREEK RELIGIONS.

1. *The ancient Romans* were a very plain and practical people. They laid the foundation for the science of government and for that of war. They had, however, less taste for art and poetry, and for philosophy. Much of the interest which they afterwards acquired for these pursuits was caught from the Greeks.

2. *The Roman religion and the Greek religion* were originally very unlike each other. Later, the two were, to some extent, united. The attributes and the history of the Greek gods were ascribed to such Roman gods as most resembled them; so that we now very commonly think of the Roman gods as possessing the qualities of the Greek, and of the Greek gods under Roman names.

3. *The Roman gods* were such as we might expect from the character of the Roman people. They were very bare and abstract. They had little personality. Very few myths grew up in regard to them. Rome was one hundred and seventy years without statues. Then, first a painted wooden statue of Jupiter was placed in the capitol. The people stood simply in a practical relation to their gods. They were very particular about the forms of worship, but further than this they said very little about the gods.

4. *The Romans recognized a vast number of gods.* They had gods for every event in life. When the child first stood alone, when it first walked, when it went out, when it came in, and, indeed, for every act and circumstance there was a special divinity to be invoked. Very often these divinities are known only in relation to this single circumstance.

5. *The service to the gods was very complicated* and difficult.

One had to be sure that he called on the right god, and that he called upon him in the right way. Any mistake might result in evil.

6. *Janus* was the god of the gates of heaven, of the morning and the evening. He was thus represented with two faces, one looking forward and the other backward. He was, on account of the function just described, the god of gates. The gates of his temple were open in time of war, and closed in time of peace; and they were rarely closed. He was peculiarly a Roman god, and was named first in the lists of gods, perhaps as ushering in the rest.

7. *Jupiter*, we have already seen to be the father in heaven. He was the god of the sky. His name was sometimes used to represent the sky itself. He was the thunderer.

8. *The names of the Roman gods* are familiar to most boys and girls. There was Venus, the goddess of gardens and pleasantness, of friendship and concord. She was also the goddess of love, and later, being identified with the Greek Aphrodite, became almost exclusively known as such. There was Saturn, the god of seeds and of sowing, who later became identified with the Greek Chronos, the god of time; and many others whose names are in the school-books.

9. *The Penates and the Lares* are often named together. The former were the gods of the household. The Lares became identified with the spirits of ancestors.

10. *The worship of ancestors* filled a great place with the Romans as with all ancient peoples. Religion was thus largely a matter of the family and the State. This was one reason why men rejoiced so much to have a son. Daughters might marry into other families, and take part in the rites of strangers; but the son would pay the fitting rites to the spirit of his father and to those of his ancestors.

11. *The Greeks were very different from the Romans.* They had great power of imagination. They had genius for art and poetry, and loved both. They were great lovers of philosophy, too; and their systems have ever since taught the world, while their poems have cheered and exalted it.

12. *The religion of the Greeks* was wholly different from that of the Romans. Their gods seem to us like real persons, so much have we heard of their deeds, and so often have we seen their images. Myths grew up about the gods without limit. Each had his story and his special characteristics.

13. *Many of these stories* are not what we should expect to hear related about the gods. But we must remember that the gods for the most part represent natural objects and forces. They stand to each other in many relations, so that when they are personified, and their relations take form in myths, we must expect to find them very fanciful and complicated, and to have our moral sense sometimes shocked.

14. *A sense of a divinity loftier* than would be implied by these stories is often found among the Greeks. Just as when the clouds open we see the bright sky, so sometimes, through and above the world of gods, with their caprices and their faults, we catch a glimpse of the upper heaven of love and holiness.

15. *We must not suppose* that the Greeks regarded their gods as mere impersonations of natural objects and relations. It is singular that they did not understand their religion as well as we do. It is the study of language, of the meaning of the names of the divinities, and the comparison of the names and histories of the gods of one nation with those of the gods of others, that have taught us their real meaning.

16. *The religion of the Greeks is the religion of beauty.* The personality of the gods is developed just enough to become beautiful. They are fresh and strong and joyful. The statues of the gods are among the most beautiful works of human art, as the poems about them remain among the most beautiful creations of poetry.

17. *No Greek gods will be especially named* and described in these lessons. Their characters are so real and so distinctly defined, the stories about them are so full, that I do not like to give mere names and functions, as I have done in regard to other religions. I can only tell you what sort of a religion the Greek religion was, and leave you to learn more about it from larger and fuller works.

18. *Belief in immortality* was held by both Greeks and Romans. Their beliefs were similar, only that of the Greeks was more fully wrought out. They believed in an under world, where there was punishment for the wicked, and happiness for the good. This life of happiness was, however, very thin and unsubstantial, and the spirits of the dead looked back with longing upon the life of the upper world. Now and then a noble hero was believed to be taken up among the gods.

QUESTIONS.

1. What were the characteristics of the ancient Romans?

What did they accomplish of most value for the world?

2. What was the relation between the religion of the Romans and that of the Greeks?

3. Characterize the Roman gods.

4. What is said of the number of the Roman divinities? What of the division of their offices?

Why do we not need special divinities for all these things? [Psalm cxxxix.]

5. What were some of the difficulties in the service of the gods?

6. Give some account of Janus.

Why do we not need a special divinity for the gates of the morning and evening? [Psalm lxv., 8.]

7. Give some account of Jupiter.

8. Name one or two other gods.

9. What were the Penates and Lares?

10. What place was filled by the worship of ancestors? Why were sons specially valued?

11. Characterize the Greeks.

What do you know about the theatre of the Greeks? What do you know about the gladiatorial shows of the Romans? How would you say that these two kinds of amusements illustrate the character of the two peoples?

12. What was the nature of the Greek religion?

13. How can we explain in part the absurdities and immoralities in the stories of the gods?

Should the sun, for instance, be considered as the child, the lover, or the brother of the dawn? Might we not suppose one as well as the other? To what is the sun compared in the Psalms? [Psalm xix., 5.] If the Hebrews had been a myth-making people, might not elaborate myths have been made out of these comparisons,—stories about the bridegroom and the racer?* Might not the sun be considered as the slayer of the dawn, because, as he rises, its colors fade? Can you not, then, understand how, in the mythology, Daphne (the dawn) flees before Apollo (the sun)? Do you remember the story of the death of Hercules? Can you point out the resemblance between that and the setting sun?

14. What sense do we find of a divinity higher than these stories would indicate?

What is the difference between religion and theology? Is not what is called theology sometimes a kind of mythology? Do men to-day, whose theology is harsh and dark, always feel towards God as they might be supposed to do? Have they not, then, a religion higher than their theology? Is it not a good thing, if we can have a theology that really expresses a true religion?

15. Did the Greeks understand their religion as well as we do?

But may they not have had a deeper sense of its meaning? May they not have felt more really the divine element in all things? Have you ever read Wordsworth's sonnet, beginning, "*The world is too much with us*"? What does he say in that about the "creed outworn" of the Pagan? But might not Nature seem more divine to us than to the Pagan? Ought it not to seem so? Should not the thought of one divine Spirit in Nature be more inspiring than that of a separate divinity in each object?

16. How is the religion of the Greeks the religion of beauty?

How are the Greek gods more beautiful than the Vedic divinities? Which have the most personality? Which are

*Renouf makes this comparison.

most closely associated with the natural objects? In reading about Jupiter or Zeus, do you need to think that he represents the heavens? Why does he hold the thunderbolt? Why is the eagle the bird of Jove? What other gods do you think of that bore marks of the object that they represented? But is not this very different from having the god so identified with the object represented that we cannot think of him as apart from it? Why were the Greek gods more beautiful than men?

17. Why are no Greek divinities named and described in this book?

18. What was the Greek and Roman belief in regard to immortality?

VII.

THE RELIGION OF EGYPT.

1. *The religion of Egypt is recognized as the most ancient* of all historical religions. We may be helped to realize its antiquity by considering that we are almost two centuries nearer to the date of Jesus than the Israelites at the time of the Exodus were to the foundation of the Egyptian kingdom. The establishment of this kingdom, it should be remembered, must have been preceded by many ages of religious and social development.

2. *Egypt has always been regarded as the land of mystery.* The Greeks felt the awe of this mystery; and we, to-day, after much exploration and study, find mystery still. The religion contains contradictions that we cannot wholly reconcile. Scholars differ in regard to the meaning of forms and beliefs that were probably, in themselves, very simple.

3. *The art of the Egyptians* is fitted to deepen this sense of mystery. All is vast and sombre. Instead of the beauty that charms us in the art of the Greeks, we find here an awful sublimity. The statues express a solemn peace. Many of the pictures that are of most interest are found in the inner shrines of temples, or in tombs, where they were hidden from the public gaze.

4. *Among the strange and contradictory elements* of the Egyptian religion, we should name the blending of monotheism and polytheism. One supreme God was worshiped, yet a multitude of gods were worshiped at the same time. Animals were also worshiped. Gods were often pictured with the heads of animals; and, in the form of the sphinx, we have

the body of a lion with a human head. All seems to us thus confused. The highest and the lowest elements seem mingled. It should be remarked, that the earlier form of the religion appears to have been purer than the later.

5. *Our difficulty probably arises*, in part, from the fact that the religion was already far developed when it is first known to us. In the hymns of the Vedas, the Hindus preserved the records of the earlier form of their religion, and thus we can understand its later forms. In the case of the Egyptian religion, these earlier steps are hidden from us.

6. *The one absolute God*, we may conjecture, was not generally regarded as a conscious spirit, but was like the Brahma of the later Hindus, the *being* in which all things consist, or, perhaps, rather the divine *power* which is manifested in all divinities and in all life.

7. *The separate divinities were each extolled as supreme*, when they were worshiped, just as was the case in the worship of the Vedic divinities. This may imply that they were felt to be manifestations of one divine power.

8. *The Egyptian gods were very numerous.* Many of them represented the sun in its varied aspects and relations, though other objects and processes of nature were also worshiped in some divine form. The god was not the same as this natural object, but was the power manifested in and through it.

9. *The animals* that were associated with the gods were probably supposed to be symbolic of the attributes of the several divinities. Thus the hawk — the bird that mounts toward the sun, and, like the sun, surveys all things — was associated with *Ra*, one of the principal sun-gods. The animals that were considered in themselves sacred seem to have symbolized the forces and mysteries of Nature.

10. *Osiris* is the most interesting of the Egyptian divinities. The myth in regard to him was more developed than in regard to the other gods. The father of Osiris was *Seb*, the earth. His mother was *Nut*, the heavens. He was killed by his brother, *Set;* was mourned by his wife, *Isis;* was avenged by his son, *Horus;* and at last arose again in life and beauty.

One of the most striking figures in Egyptian art is that of Isis holding the infant Horus in her arms.

11. *Many explanations* are given of this myth. According to one, Osiris represents the sun hidden at night. According to another, he represents the sun shorn of his might in winter; and, according to still another, the Nile when it shrinks into itself after the inundation. Sometimes, it is supposed to be the seed that is buried in the earth, in order that it may through death germinate into life. But, whatever be decided to be the special symbolism of the story of Osiris, its general lesson is the triumph that comes through defeat and loss.

12. *The sun, hidden and buried* at night, and rising in the morning, we may assume to furnish the most probable explanation of the myth, even though other symbolism may have been united with this. If we take this view, Isis may be regarded as the dawn; Set, as somehow connected with the darkness, and thus as contributing to the overthrow of Osiris; while Horus was the light of the upper heavens. In regard to Set, in particular, there is, however, much obscurity. In the earlier times, he was worshiped as a god. Later, he was regarded as the principle of evil.

13. *What became of the sun at night*, must have been an interesting question to this ancient people. The sun sets in the west; how can it get round to the east, in order to rise again? They regarded the earth as fixed. The sun must, therefore, find some passage under the earth, by which it may pass from the west to the east.

14. *The souls of the dead* were believed to join Osiris, and to press with him through the difficulties of the under world. Their hearts were weighed; the result being according to the good or evil deeds that had marked the life of each. Those who were found wanting were punished miserably. Those who were approved kept on their perilous way. Trials and terrors of many sorts beset them. There were directions how to meet these, and charms to be used in order to escape them. These were inscribed upon the tombs, and recorded in books that were sometimes placed beneath the arm of the dead, or on

amulets worn by them. The study of these directions during life was considered very important. If the souls passed through all successfully, they shared the triumph of Osiris; they indeed became identified with him, and were called by his name; they were with him in glory.

15. *The bodies of the dead* were carefully embalmed, and preserved in solid tombs, the most massive and famous of which are the Pyramids. It is commonly supposed that this was done in order that the spirits might at last become united with them again. The bodies of the sacred animals were also embalmed and preserved with like care.

16. *The morality* taught by this religion was very lofty. Evil speaking and lying, exaggeration and idle words are condemned. Oppression, fraud, the causing of pain to others, as well as the grosser sins, are forbidden. Souls that had committed such sins were condemned at the judgment.

QUESTIONS.

1. What is supposed to be the comparative antiquity of the Egyptian religion?

2. What is said of the mystery of the religion?

3. In what respects is the Egyptian art suited to the religion?

> Did you ever see a picture of an Egyptian statue? If you have, compare it with the Greek statues that you have seen pictures of. Do you remember what Longfellow said of "Builders" "in the elder days of art"?

4. What are some of the elements of the Egyptian religion that seem strange and contradictory to us? What is one point of difference between the earlier and later forms of this religion?

> Did these elements necessarily appear contradictory to them? Do not persons often seem to us to be inconsistent, because we have not learned what they really think and mean? But do persons never believe doctrines that seem to them self-contradictory? Are any of us perfectly consistent in our thought and conduct?

5. What may be one chief source of our difficulty?

Suppose that thousands of years hence our houses and churches were discovered with no hint of our past history, might not the world be puzzled to know what it all meant?

6. Of what nature was probably the one absolute God?

7. In what respect may the worship of the separate gods be compared with that of the Vedic divinities? What may this imply?

Might there be no other reason for this? Would it not be natural to exalt the god from whom they expected present favors?

8. What can you say of the number of the Egyptian gods? What of their nature?

9. What was the basis of the worship of animals?

Do you remember what was said about animal worship in the first lesson? Do you remember under what form the Greeks chiefly worshiped the gods? Under what form do Christians find the highest manifestation of God? Is not God really manifested through all forms of being? May he not be really worshiped under all? But is he not most perfectly manifested through the highest form? What did Jesus say of the nature of God? [John iv., 24.] Where, then, shall we find him best revealed?

10. What is the story of Osiris?

What does the figure of Isis and Horus remind you of? Why is it natural that men should worship the divine under the figure of the mother and child?

11. What are some of the explanations that have been given of the story of Osiris? What lesson do they all teach?

Is not this also the central lesson of Christianity? [John xii., 24.]

12. Give more fully the explanation that is based upon the hidden sun.

13. What did the Egyptians believe became of the sun at night? What did they believe about the earth?

Must it not have been a startling thought, when men first learned that the earth is not fixed, but is whirling through space? Is it any less wonderful now?

14. What was believed in regard to the souls of the dead?

15. What was done with the bodies of the dead?

Is there any resemblance between Osiris and Yama? [See Lesson III.]

16. What was the nature of the morality taught by this religion?

What, then, helped to give weight to the heart when it was weighed? What did this weighing symbolize? What do we mean by *weight* when we use the term in relation to character? What is a "light character"? How does this resemble an object that is physically light? Are we not all weighed? In spite of all superstition, were not the Egyptians right in regarding the weighing as an important matter? What other religion have you studied that recognizes a weighing after death?

VIII.

THE RELIGIONS OF CHINA.

1. *There is no one religion* properly to be called the religion of China. What in a special manner may be called the State religion has undergone many changes in the course of history, and other religions have been founded within the empire or introduced into it from without.

2. *The ancient religion of China* was in many respects an exalted one. Though not wholly free from superstition, it recognized a supreme deity, possessing really divine attributes.

3. *The name of this deity was Shang Ti*, or the supreme ruler. He is often spoken of as "Heaven"; just as we to-day speak sometimes of the "will of Heaven," when we mean the will of God. The relation of Shang Ti to the visible heaven was, however, probably closer than this comparison would imply. Shang Ti was believed to be inflexibly just. No worship and no partiality could induce him to favor the wicked.

4. *Prosperity depended upon the righteousness* of the people. When righteousness prevailed, there were fertile crops and peaceful days. When unrighteousness prevailed, there were tempests and floods and all evils. Much depended upon the justice and purity of the government. When this was wrong, the good and bad suffered together, from such natural evils as have been referred to.

5. *The ancient Chinese worshiped also other and lower divinities.* They worshiped the spirits of the mountains and the grain, for instance. These spirits were pure abstractions, without history or personality. They may thus remind us of many Roman divinities. They also worshiped the spirits of departed ancestors.

6. *The spirits of ancestors* were worshiped by means of feasts. They were represented at the feasts by a boy, who received the homage of those present, and partook of the offerings. He was welcomed with joy, and his presence was a sign of good fortune.

7. *Confucius* was born 551 B.C. When he lived, the ancient religion had already lost something of its hold upon men. Confucius attempted to revive the customs and religious rites of the past. He was an historian and a statesman, as well as a teacher of morality.

8. *He lived a beautiful and self-sacrificing life.* He gave himself wholly to his efforts at reform. He wandered from State to State, often exposed to peril and privation, but was always true to his high mission.

9. *Confucius was earnest in religious service*, and gained great strength and peace from his faith in God, whose instrument he felt that he was.

10. *Religion had little place, however, in his teaching.* He contented himself with urging attention to the forms of religion, as if these were sufficient in themselves.

11. *The morality that he taught*, was, however, very exalted. He even gave to his followers what we know as the "Golden Rule"; only he gave it in a negative form: Do not do to others what you would not wish others to do to you.

12. *The Chinese reverence the name of Confucius* as that of the most perfect of men, and his teaching has been in many respects of great service to them ever since he lived.

13. *The State religion has become still more a form* since the time of Confucius, but its forms are still carefully observed.

14. *The Chinese of to-day worship* heaven, and the spirits of whatever is most helpful to man. They have also many idols. One of the most important divinities is the god of the kitchen. He remains all the year near the hearth, and, at the end of the year, is believed to depart, bearing to heaven the record of the good or evil that the members of the household have done during the year. When he has gone, they believe that another takes his place.

15. *The Chinese have no priests.* The emperor is the chief performer of religious rites. Every official is expected to take part in them. Common people also have their own rites.

16. *The ancestors* are still honored. They are represented, however, not by a boy, but by tablets, inscribed with their names.

17. *Besides this State religion*, there is another religion in China called Tauism. This arose, at first, from the teaching of Lao-tsze, one of the noblest and most exalted of the teachers of men. His followers, however, did not understand his words, which are indeed very obscure: so this religion is mostly a system of magical rites, without meaning.

18. *Buddhism* is also recognized as a religion in China. The pagodas that you see represented in pictures are Buddhist temples.

19. *These three religions* (the State religion, Tauism, and Buddhism) do not divide the people in China, so that some accept one and some another. The people in general accept them all, and use the rites of one or another, as they think them best fitted for certain ends.

20. *Religion has lost much of its life* in China, because the forms of religion have been so much more insisted on than its truths. The rites of religion may be very helpful; but when they become more prominent than the ideas of religion then they become mechanical, and real religion tends to die out.

21. *The spirit of the Chinese is prosaic and practical.* They tend to see each thing as it is in itself, rather than in its grand relations. They have thus accomplished some very wonderful things for practical purposes, but have less than some other peoples of the high ideals that take form in religion. Thus religion has tended to be less a power in their lives than at the first.

QUESTIONS.

1. Is there any one religion of China? What do we find instead of this?

2. What was the nature of the ancient religion of China?

3. What was the name of its chief divinity? What were his characteristics?

4. What was believed to be the relation between righteousness and prosperity?

Do you think that rain or sunshine depends upon the moral character of men? What was the teaching of Jesus? [Matt. v., 45.] What good effects do follow, in general, righteousness in a nation? What evil effects follow unrighteousness?

5. What are some of the other divinities worshiped by the Chinese? Compare these with the Roman divinities.

Why do we not worship the spirits of the mountains, grains, and other objects? Do they not manifest some divine power and goodness? What do we recognize and worship in the place of these spirits?

6. How did the ancient Chinese honor the spirits of the dead?

Why do we not have feasts for the spirits of those whom we love? In what better ways can we honor them?

7. When did Confucius live? What did he attempt? What were his occupations?

8. What was the nature of his life?

Why have men so honored the memory of Buddha and Confucius? Why that of Jesus? What did Jesus say was the true greatness? [Matt. xx., 27.]

9. What was the relation of Confucius to religion as a man?

10. As a teacher?

In this, how does he resemble Jesus? How does he differ from him? Can you separate the moral and religious teachings of Jesus from one another, say in the first verses of the Sermon on the Mount?

11. What was the nature of the moral teaching of Confucius? Repeat his Golden Rule.

How does this differ from the Golden Rule as given by Jesus? What would this latter have us do that the other does not name? Do many Christians really live up to the Golden Rule of Confucius? Suppose you should try one week to live

up to the Golden Rule of Confucius, and the next to live up to that of Jesus. Do you think that you could wholly live up to that of Jesus? What is the advantage in having a rule that we cannot wholly reach?

12. What has been the effect of Confucius upon his nation?

13. What has been the character of the Chinese religion since his day?

If he had taught more definitely religious truth, might the result not have been better? Which do you think has done most good, the religious or the moral part of the teaching of Jesus? Would the religious teaching have done much good without the moral teaching?

14. What do the Chinese now worship?

Would it not be a good thing to have such a god of the kitchen in every house? But does God need to have some lower divinity to report what we do? [Psalm cxxxix., 2–4.]

15. Who perform the part of priests in the Chinese state religion?

16. How are the ancestors now honored?

17. What other religion is found in China?

Have the teachings of Jesus ever been thus perverted? Do you think that Jesus would recognize his own religion in some of the forms that it has taken?

18. What third religion is found in China?

19. What is the relation of these three religions to one another?

20. What has been one reason of the loss of power by religion in China?

Why do people go to church? Does the mere *going to church* do any good? Is it enough to *hear* a prayer or a sermon? Is it enough to *understand* them? What is needed?

21. What is said of the characteristics of the Chinese? What was, therefore, the tendency of religion among them?

Do you suppose that such a statement as that in the text is true of all Chinese? What is an American's idea of the typical Englishman? What do we mean by "John Bull"?

What is the Englishman's idea of "Brother Jonathan"? Have these ideas any truth? Yet would all, or even most, Englishmen or Americans conform to these ideas? Do you suppose that the Chinese are all alike? May we not, however, be helped by such general ideas of the people of different countries, if we do not hold them too strictly? Why should we not see everything as it is in itself? When Wordsworth said of Peter Bell:—

> A primrose by a river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more,

What did he mean? What more was it? Is there, then, more in the world than we can really see? What does Tennyson mean in his poem about the "Flower in the crannied wall"?

IX.

CONCLUSION.

1. *The religion of the savage is superstition*, as we have seen, because the savage has *no idea* of his divinities, except that they are powers that can help or injure him.

2. *The Hindu* came to see in God the being in which all things consist. He had so far an idea of God. He did not add to this the idea of goodness. He could not say, "God is good." He could only say, "God is all."

3. *The Buddhists* had an idea of goodness, but not of a good God. The universe was not good. Existence was an evil to be escaped from. Life could not be made so good as to be worth living. Their idea of goodness they embodied in the gracious form of Buddha. He could not change the nature of things. He could only call to us to escape with him from existence.

4. *The Parsees* saw that God is good. They believed that he is to make the world good. But man was his creature, not his child. Man could worship and serve him, but not become one with him. We do not find in their religion the sympathy for weakness and suffering that we find in Buddhism. Yet it was a noble and beautiful religion.

5. *The religion of the Greeks was a religion of beauty*. The gods and goddesses were so beautiful that men loved to make images of them that we delight in now, and to sing about them in poems that we now are glad to read. But these divinities were only beautiful; they were not good, like the God of the Parsees.

6. *The Egyptian religion seems to us full of mystery.* We can only understand that the Egyptians worshiped in their divinities the hidden life of Nature. This they set forth in forms that seem strange and confused to us.

7. *The early Chinese* had fewer superstitions than many other peoples. They had a very lofty idea of God. They had much practical common sense, but they have lacked enthusiasm for the highest ideals. They have trusted too much to forms. Thus religion in its best reality has tended to die away among them.

8. *The religions that we have studied were not wholly false.* So far as they were religions, they were true. Each had a partial truth, united with many errors. Pure Christianity holds all these truths. Each, joined with the others, is more perfect than it was alone. Tnus Christianity is the fulfilment of all, as it was the fulfilment of the religion of the Jews.

9. *The religion of the savage is true*, so far as it goes. The savage recognizes the presence of some power that he cannot see. He is right in turning to this, and trying to make it his friend. But, because he knows only that it is a power, he fears it. He does not know that it is good, and that he can become one with it only by becoming good. Christianity teaches this. Thus Christianity fills out the bare belief of the savage, with its great fulness.

10. *Christianity teaches with the Hindus* that we and all things are in God. It adds to this the truth taught by the Mazdean religion, that God is wholly good. These two truths take each a new meaning, when they are thus united. Our life is from and in God. God becomes known as the loving Father. But it should be noticed that the Parsees have a faith in the final triumph of goodness that many Christians lack.

11. *Christianity is like Buddhism* in teaching love and sympathy for man. Like Buddhism, it has its idea of goodness embodied in a human life, Jesus manifesting the Christian ideal as Buddhism manifested the Buddhist ideal. But it adds to this the thought of a good God our Father, in whom and through whom we live, and to whom we may live. Because

Christianity has this lofty thought, it teaches what Buddhism could not,—that life may be a good. The world itself is good, since it manifests God.

12. *Christianity is like the Greek religion*, in that it can make us rejoice in the beauty of the universe. It makes us see, also, God manifested through man. But it adds to the thought of beauty that of goodness. And what most reveals God in man is not the physical beauty by which the Greeks set forth the divinity; or even the dignity and grace which they show us in some of their representations of the gods; but the higher spiritual qualities, the love and self-sacrifice, that are shown in Jesus. These most clearly manifest God to us.

13. *The mystery that we find in the Egyptian religion* is not absent from Christianity. All things manifest God, yet we cannot understand him. He has learned little who is not awed by the sense of the mystery of the universe, and the mystery of God. But Christianity brightens the mystery by the thought of the infinite love. Even the mystery may become a source of joy, like that which we feel in the forest, or in some cathedral of the old world.

14. *We need the common sense of the Chinese* no less than the mystery of the Egyptians and the poetry of the Greeks. We need to use our understanding in religious matters, as in all others. But this alone is not enough. Christianity brings an enthusiasm which is even more precious than the clearness of common sense. It does not oppose our understanding; it goes far beyond it. It brings a faith in what we cannot see, or wholly comprehend.

15. *These religions teach certain forms* and ceremonies by which the favor of the divinity may be secured. Each religion has its ceremonies, and those of each differ from those of all the rest. Buddhism, indeed, has no such method of winning the favor of God, because it has no supreme God to whom it turns. Christianity trusts to no forms. If it uses forms, it is because these help the moral and spiritual life; not because, in themselves, they will please God. There is only one way of pleasing God, and that is the striving to do his will.

QUESTIONS.

1. Why is the religion of the savage superstition?

2. What idea did the Hindus have of God? What did this idea of God lack?

3. Did the Buddhists have an idea of a good God? How did they regard the world and life? How did they embody their idea of goodness?

4. What idea did the Parsees have of God? What was the relation of man to him?

5. How did the Greeks represent their divinities? What did their thought of the divinities lack?

6. How does the Egyptian religion seem to us?

7. What is said of the Chinese and their religion?

8. Were these religions wholly false? What is the relation of Christianity to them?

9. What truth has the religion of the savage? What does this religion lack that Christianity adds?

10. What does Christianity teach with the Hindus? What does it add that the Mazdean religion taught? What is the truth that it teaches about God? What faith had the Parsees that many Christians have not?

11. In what does Christianity agree with Buddhism? What does it add to the teaching of Buddhism?

12. In what is Christianity like the Greek religion? What does it add to this?

13. What has Christianity in common with the Egyptian religion? What does it add to this?

14. What do we need that the Chinese have? What more is needed that Christianity adds?

15. What place do forms hold in these religions? What is the relation of Christianity to forms? How does it teach that we can please God?

Are there no Christians who depend upon forms? Could we do without forms altogether? Why do we shake hands when

we meet? Is it not easier and pleasanter often to express our feelings by some such sign than to tell a friend how much we think of him? Why do parents caress a little child before it can understand? Does it do the child any good? May not forms thus have a use in religion? May not religious feelings sometimes express themselves best by signs and forms? But is not this different from trusting to forms, as if they had some saving power in themselves? Because the Christian religion is the best, does it follow that all Christians are better than the followers of other faiths? May not the follower of another faith be better than many Christians? Can a man be judged, then, by the faith he holds? How may he be judged? Does a man really hold a faith that he does not try to obey? Who can be truly called Christians? [Compare Matt. vii., 21.]

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